



New

Drum Kits

FOR 2015

By Bob Saydlowski



heir names are forever etched in drum history. George Stone.

Ulysses Leedy. George Way. Billy Gladstone. These and an elite handful of other visionaries invented many of the innovations we now take for granted on our drum kits: snare baskets, bass drum pedals, hi-hat stands, even the very idea of the drum set itself was at one time considered new and revolutionary.

One wonders what these forefathers of modern drum design would think if they could see today's array of shell materials, sizes, finishes, bearing edges, lug types, setup configurations, and mounting systems. If they were somewhat baffled by the raft of choices flooding today's market, at least they wouldn't be alone. Even the savviest 21st century

drummer is faced with such a huge selection of gear from a vast number of companies that the choices can seem overwhelming.

That's where we come in. This past Winter NAMM Show once again brought some new

thinking to today's drummers, as well as nods to classic aesthetics. So to help make some sense of this year's drum kit selection, we've assembled the following rundown of the freshest kits for 2015.

THE VINTAGE VIBE

The resurgence of interest in vintage drum designs shows no sign of letting up, with collectors hunting for originals (despite their inherent flaws) as well as players who want the vintage look and sound without the headaches of out-of-round shells, flimsy hardware, and just plain beat-up finishes. In 2015, retro is still cool.

The builders at **Chicago Custom Percussion** expanded

their Classic series by offering 6-ply kits in mahogany and maple/poplar/maple shells, all with 30-degree edges and 6-ply reinforcing rings. No power sizes or short stacks here, Classic drums stay true to vintage sizes with 14"-deep bass drums and traditional tom depths. In keeping with the vintage vibe, finishes such as Red Satin Flame and Aged White Marine Pearl are available. Three-piece kits have an MSRP of \$1,800 (as well as cool model names like Ella and Sophia); an optional snare drum bumps the MSRP to \$2,150. CCP tells us that Brad Hargreaves with Third Eye Blind is taking a Chicago Classic kit out on the road.



2 PDP Concept Classic Wood Hoop kit



1 DW Design Series Concert Toms

① Let's time travel back to the 1970s for a second — **DW** has introduced concert toms for its Design Series in a set of either 6" x 5" and 8" x 5" or 8" x 5" and 10" x 5" drums (\$499.99 MSRP) for that thick, single-headed *Midnight Special* tom sound. The shells are HVLTL maple, and like Henry Ford said, available in any color you want — as long as it's Satin Black.

Drummers who love the sound of old **Ludwig** shells from the '60s and '70s wholeheartedly embraced Ludwig's Legacy Series, and now have even more to cheer about with the introduction of the Legacy Mahogany kit. With its 3-ply shells of mahogany/poplar/mahogany, maple reinforcing rings, and baseball bat edges, the latest Legacy outfit recreates classic 1950s shells and that ultra-warm sound of mahogany. Ludwig has placed large Classic lugs, keystone badges, and lightweight folding spurs on the drums, which are offered in Mahogany Satin, Large-Chip White Marine Pearl, Black Diamond Pearl, Onyx Marine Pearl (an aged version of White Marine Pearl), Burgundy Sparkle, and Nickel Sparkle finishes. Five kit configurations are available, including a compact Jazzette setup with an 18" x 14" bass drum, 12" x 8" mounted tom, and 14" x 14" floor tom (\$4,959 MSRP) as well as a beefier Super Classic setup with 22" x 14" bass drum, 13" x 9" mounted tom, and a 16" x 16" floor tom (\$5,075 MSRP).

Wood hoop drum sets were all the rage about 20 years ago, as one company after another launched models that appeared to come straight from WWII. While the frenzy peaked a while back, that woody retro look never entirely disappeared. In fact, you're likely to own a kit with wood bass drum hoops right now, even if your other drums are topped with triple flanged. If this sounds like your kit, and you want to satisfy your inner Levon Helm without investing in an



③ Pearl Wood/Fiberglass Series Kit in Satin Cocoa Burst

entirely new setup, ② **PDP** has come to the rescue with the new Concept Classic Wood Hoop Tom Pack. Its all-maple 13" x 9" mounted tom and 16" x 16" floor tom are fitted with maple counterhoops secured with recessed, stamped claw hooks to complete the old-school optics. Two finishes are available — Satin Natural Maple with Walnut Stain hoops, and Walnut Stain shells with Maple hoops (MSRP: \$749.99). Always thinking, PDP's R&D VIPs also offer an add-on 12" x 8" mounted tom (\$349.99), an 18" x 16" floor

tom (\$516.99), as well as bass drums ranging from 22" to 26" (in an old-school 14" shell depth, \$749.99–\$916.99) for players who are ready to take the plunge.

③ **Pearl** revisits the late '60s with a reissue of the Wood/Fiberglass Series drum kits, featuring 6-ply, 7.5mm poplar/kapur shells with an inner layer of fiberglass, hand-applied as a sheet and lacquered. (Older Pearl fans may remember the originals were luan with a rough texture fiberglass coating over the interior.) Toms are cut with 45-degree

bearing edges while bass drums feature a rounded edge to accentuate low end. Fittings blend the best of old aesthetics and high-tech, with Pearl '70s-style badges combined with modern OptiMount tom holders, Session-style lugs, Masters floor tom brackets, Superhoops II counterhoops on toms, and wood bass drum hoops (as opposed to the metal hoops on the '70s versions).

Pearl is offering four lacquer finishes (Piano Black, Platinum Mist, Antique Gold, and Satin Cocoa Burst) and three shell packs of classic sizes: 22" x 14" bass drum, 13" x 9" mounted tom, 16" x 16" floor tom (\$1,759 MSRP), 24" x 14" bass drum, 13" x 9" mounted tom, and 16" x 16" floor tom (\$1,799 MSRP), and 20" x 14" bass drum, 12" x 8" mounted tom, and 14" x 14" floor tom (\$1,665 MSRP), as well as component drums.

④ To celebrate 140 years of drum making, **Sonor** has introduced its Vintage Series. Built with 9-ply, 6mm German beech wood, the shells are crafted using Sonor's modern CLTF (cross-laminated tension free) process and have rounded bearing edges. To complete the retro Sonor look,



④ Sonor Vintage Series in aged Vintage Pearl wrap

New Drum Kits

Vintage Series drums feature the company's classic teardrop lugs of the '50s and '60s, which were updated with the patented TuneSafe to prevent tension rods from loosening. The snare drum utilizes the Super 50 strainer, a redesign of the 1950s throw-off system, and all drums feature teardrop-era styled badges and logos. Available in an aged Vintage Pearl wrap, as well as Vintage Onyx and Vintage Natural semi-gloss stain finishes, the Vintage Series is offered in two pre-configured shell packs: 20" x 14" bass drum, 12" x 8" mounted tom, and 14" x 12" floor tom (\$4,479 MSRP for stain; \$4,679 for Vintage Pearl wrap) and 22" x 14" bass drum, 13" x 8" mounted tom, and 16" x 14" floor tom (\$4,579 MSRP for stain and \$4,799 for Vintage Pearl wrap) as well as a number of single components, so you can customize your own setup. Matching snare drums are offered in 14" x 5.75" and 14" x 6.5" at \$1,279 and \$1,299 respectively.

5 Acrylic shell kits have never gone out of style, despite the fact that they're most closely linked to the rockin' '70s. Now **Tama** has introduced its latest see-through kit with the Limited Edition Silverstar Mirage outfit. With seamless



5 Tama's acrylic Limited Edition Silverstar Mirage kit

Crystal Ice transparent acrylic shells fitted with low-mass single lugs, stabilizing claw hooks, and the Star-Mount System, Silverstar Mirage is available as a 5-piece kit with a 22" x 18" bass drum, 10" x 7" and 12" x 8" mounted toms, and a 16" x 14" floor tom. Best of all, Tama sweetens the deal with a matching snare drum, all for an MSRP of \$1,833.32.

SCALE IT DOWN

As stages get tighter, drum companies continue seeking ways to downsize a drum kit's footprint without sacrificing

sound or playability. Plus — let's face it — smaller kits offer the added benefit of being easier to load in your car and carry up flights of stairs. So if your back has begun barking at you after gigs, or your bandmates are tired of setting up in the men's room, it might be time to look into a smaller set.

6 Last year's Jet Set kit from **Dixon** now has a big brother. The new Jet Set Plus set is equipped with traditional drumheads on top and mesh heads on the bottom, and mounts placed in the center of the 9-ply, 10mm mahogany shells, letting the player flip

the drums over to change from full volume to virtually no sound (thanks to the mesh heads). The kit can be played while sitting or standing and, best of all, the drums pack into a single case for the ultimate in portability. The Jet Set Plus kit has a 16" x 12" bass drum, 8" x 6" and 10" x 6" toms, a 12" x 10" floor tom, and a 12" x 4.5" snare drum, available in Orange, Red, or Blue Sparkle. MSRP: \$1,349.99, including hardware and cymbals. A rolling gig bag is \$298.99.

Hot on the heels of last year's Frequent Flyer kit, **DW** rereleased the even more compact Design Series Mini-Pro. Originally envisioned as a high-end kit for kids, the set features a 16" x 14" bass drum, 10" x 6" tom, 13" x 9" floor tom, and a 12" x 5" snare drum — all made of North American maple shells with no reinforcing hoops. Offered in a choice of Matte Black Satin or Tobacco Burst Gloss, with low-mass spurs and a ratchet bass drum mount, the Mini-Pro described above has an MSRP of \$1,833.99. A second option with an 18" x 14" bass drum and 13" x 5" snare is \$1,999.99 MSRP.

Last year **Tama** entered the race to create the world's coolest compact kit with the

6 Dixon's Jet Set Plus kit reconfigures for standing or sitting and packs up into a single case.



introduction of the 4-piece Silverstar Cocktail-Jam set, which cleverly let you align the drums into either a vertical cocktail setup or a traditional sit-down configuration. This year Tama upped the ante with the Cocktail-Jam Hybrid, which ships with a Roland TM-2 sound module and RT-10S dual- and RT-10T single triggers, so you can make that little kit sound even bigger for an MSRP of \$1,666.65.

But Tama didn't stop there. The company also unveiled the 100-percent birch Silverstar Metro Jam, which splits the difference between the unconventional Cocktail-Jam chameleon kit and a more standard looking setup. Featuring a 10" x 6.5" tom, 13" x 11" floor tom, and a 16" x 14" bass drum (complete with a pedal lifter and cutaway bass drum hoop to accommodate your bass pedal chassis), the set is available in White Sparkle, Antique Brown Burst, and Light Blue Lacquer finishes (\$833.32 MSRP).

Borrowing its name from the equipment pack Emergency Medical Services and Fire Department first responders grab on their way to a crisis call, the two-piece **RBH Americana**



7 Craviotto's new Center Stage set features one-ply solid maple shells.

Jump Kit is derived from the age-old cocktail kit concept. Its 16" x 13" bass drum is elevated by a Dixon Drum Lift and features a universal mount that will accommodate a tom holder or snare basket. RBH supplies the entire kit — including a 13" x 5" Monarch snare, axis basket, and soft case — for \$2,750 MSRP, although a 10" x 7" tom and 13" x 13" floor tom are optional.

7 While just a little larger than other kits covered here, **Craviotto's** new Center Stage set features the one-ply solid maple shells with special

walnut diamond inlays that made the company famous worldwide. According to the builders, when fitted with new lightweight center-mounted diamond-shaped cast lugs, Center Stage shells deliver the same wide tuning range and distinct resonance drummers have come to expect from the company. Craviotto drums are known to price at the higher end of the spectrum, but the Center Stage is a bit more reasonable, with a street price for an 18" x 12" (or 20" x 12") bass drum, 12" x 7" tom, and 14" x 12" floor tom of \$3,600.

8 DW's Timeless Timber Romanian River Oak kit with synthetic leather-wrapped bass drum hoops.



WHY SETTLE?

There may come a time when an off-the-rack drum kit just won't do. Perhaps you've reached the pinnacle of your drumming career and need something special to set you apart. Or maybe you just want to pamper yourself. We're not talking Toyota here — think Bentley or Lamborghini and you're in the ballpark.

8 Woodologist John Good came across some bog oak that had been living underwater for 1,500 years in low oxygen conditions, protecting it from decay. After making a kit out of this nearly fossilized wood for Neil Peart to use on Rush's upcoming R40 Tour, Good saw the opportunity to write the next chapter in DW's Timeless Timber series. The Timeless Timber Romanian River Oak kit features antique bronze hardware, laser-cut badges, and a natural hard satin finish. A cool touch is DW's new Lux Leather bass drum hoops, which are wood hoops hand-wrapped in high-grade synthetic leather. (Good claims he got the inspiration from looking at the leather-wrapped steering wheel in his car. These hoops are also available as a retrofit for all DW kits, with five different colors and a two-to-three month lead time). Fewer than 100 6-piece Timeless Timber Oak kits will be built at an approximate MSRP of \$12,308.

There are plenty of stave snare drums out there, but **Hendrix Drums** took the process further by specializing in complete stave-shell kits. The company originally offered only walnut and cherry shells, but this year expanded its selection to include maple, birch, and mahogany stave drums. Hendrix's drums are made with ultrathin 1/4" solid staves (bass drums are 5/16") with integrated reinforcing rings lathed into the staves (so they become thicker at the top and bottom bearing edges). Toms come with S-hoops and all drums have aluminum distance-adjustable lugs.

A typical setup of 10" x 8", 12" x 9" toms, and 14" x 16" toms, with a 22" x 18" bass drum carries an MSRP of \$7,999 (without snare drum).

Remember **Sonor's** 140th birthday? Well, in addition to its Vintage Series, the company decided to produce some celebratory One-Of-A-Kind Limited drum kits. The plan is to build and sell only 40 kits worldwide, using 9-ply North American maple and a special deep, dark red Vavona Burl veneer inside and out. A wide selection of component drum sizes is available: 18"-24" bass drums, 8"-13" toms, and 14"-18" floor toms. MSRP for a typical 4-piece configuration of a 22" x 18" bass drum, 10" x 8" and 12" x 9" mounted toms, and a 16" x 16" floor tom is \$15,810.

MIX IT UP

The hybrid-shell craze shows no sign of slowing down, and why should it? It's the logical choice for drummers who think maple or birch just won't do.

When **Dixon** introduced the Fuse series a couple years back, mid-level drummers were given a great new option for hybrid cherry/mahogany-shell drums with upscale features, satin hardware, and satin finishes. This year the company made a few changes, first by renaming the original model Fuse Profile



9 Natal introduced the Arcadia Series, its first midline kit.

Cherry to make way for the brand new Fuse Profile Maple. Another hybrid kit, blending three plies of maple with three plies of mahogany, the Fuse Profile Maple is available in three configurations and four gloss finishes (MSRPs range from \$1,149 to \$1,239). What's more, the company introduced the Fuse Artist Profile Maple, a 4-piece setup inspired by Dixon endorser Gregg Bissonette's personal kit, with a 24" x 18" bass drum, 12" x 10" mounted tom, 16" x 16" floor tom, and 14" x 6.5" snare in a Sea Foam Green Sparkle. \$1,549 MSRP.

While it might seem as if **RBH Drums** has floated under the radar in recent years, the custom builder has in fact steadily continued to expand its roster of fine handmade kits, including its most recent launch, the Monarch Series With Diamond Inlays. RBH's MSDI drums feature 3-ply mahogany/poplar/curly maple shells circled with a strip of inlay, which is interrupted at regular intervals by large diamond inlays. The company displayed a beautiful kit with a cherry strip inlay and burl walnut diamonds at the

NAMM show, although buyers can order any species they choose for the ornamentation.

After producing a number of high-end kits made from a variety of wood species over the past five years, **Natal** introduced its first midline kit at the winter NAMM show. Dubbed the Arcadia Series, these drums feature birch/poplar shells with 1.5mm hoops and miniature versions of Natal's distinctive sun lugs. Offered in Matte Natural, Transparent Cherry Red, and Transparent Black finishes, Arcadia drums are available in two shell packs, both including a snare drum: a 5-piece (22" x 18" bass drum, 10" x 8" and 12" x 9" mounted toms, a 16" x 16" floor tom, and 14" x 5.5" snare) for an MSRP of \$1,174, and a 4-piece (24" x 16" bass drum, 13" x 9" mounted tom, 16" x 16" floor tom, and a 14" x 6.5" snare) for an MSRP of \$1,125.

Only a handful of custom drum companies actually go to the trouble of building their own shells, and **Stone Custom Drums** is one of those few. After scoring the tooling for Slingerland drums a few years ago, the company began humbly by building OEM shells for other companies, then expanded into its own exotic wood-shell snares, and finally, in the last couple years, took the leap into kits. Stone's latest launch is the Super America Series, which is built around 9-ply, 9mm hybrid shells cut with 30-degree inner/20-degree outer bearing edges. At the core of each shell is a single ply of cherry or Indiana walnut, wrapped on both sides by three mahogany plies. Buyers can then customize the two inner and two outer plies with any species they prefer. Shell packs come with beavertail lugs, stick-saver hoops, bass drum legs, and mounting hardware of your choice. Prices for a 4-piece range from \$3,500 to \$3,800.

The 10th Anniversary kit from **DDrum** pulls together the most popular features

10 DDrum's 10th Anniversary kit with a dazzling Black-To-Red Sparkle-To-Black Burst finish



New Drum Kits

from its various lines into one monster rig. The kit's 6-ply tom and 8-ply bass drum shells each feature two maple outer plies over alder, and are said to deliver a rich mid-low punch with attack and sustain. Toms are fitted with die-cast hoops from the Dominion series, and all drums have 45/30 bearing edges and black nickel-plated tube lugs from the Dios series, Fixtpitch mounts and Resolifts from the Reflex series, and a dazzling Black-To-Red Sparkle-To-Black Burst finish. The 10th Anniversary kit comes in a single shell pack of 22" x 20" bass drum, 10" x 7" and 12" x 8" mounted toms, and 14" x 13" and 16" x 14" floor toms for \$2,300 MSRP.

The master craftsman at **Gaai** has carved out a unique place in the market — quite literally — with precision-cut outer wood veneers and glitter wraps that grace the company's various models. This year Gaai added the new Y-Neck kit into its G Series, which features zebrawood, wenge, and mahogany veneers cut into stripes and wedges, arranged like puzzle pieces, and then applied to its shells and wood



⑪ Mair Drums Complex kit is a combination of wound carbon fiber and Kevlar threads.

hoops. Available in a setup of an 18" x 15" bass drum, 10" x 7" mounted tom, 14" x 13" floor tom, and 13" x 6" snare, at an MSRP of \$3,960, Gaai's Y-Neck makes a bold artistic statement without being gaudy.

NAMM NEWCOMERS

There's a first time for everything, including a drum company's initial appearance at the NAMM show. It might not sound like a big deal to the uninitiated, but those builders who haul their gear across

country to display them for drum shop owners from around the world see it as a rite of passage. This year's gear expo saw a couple new contenders in the drum market.

While **Downing Drums** was among the new faces, it actually wasn't the first time company owner Michael Downing offered his unique drum set designs to NAMM attendees. If the name Mymi Drums rings a bell, you're more than halfway there. Downing took his first stab at introducing his designs and

concepts under the Mymi banner in the early 2000s, and now continues to employ his impressively engineered free-floating system in his new namesake brand. While the idea of a free-floating shell might not be new, Downing's system takes it a step further by suspending the shell between both drumheads, making it the world's only dual tension free-floating drum set on the market. So if you're a free-floating fan, you will want to see these drums up close.

⑫ Mixing materials other than wood is a specialty of **Mair Drums** (previously known as Ming Drums). The Complex is a combination of wound carbon fiber and Kevlar threads, resulting in what the company says is an extremely lightweight drum kit (a carbon fiber/fiberglass option is also available). Snares and toms have 8mm reinforcing rings, while bass drums and floor toms feature 20mm reinforcing rings. Sizes range from 6" to 24" with different color options and a choice of steel, die-cast, or carbon fiber hoops and lugs. MSRP for a standard kit starts at \$5,999.

WE'RE GETTING NUTTY

⑬ A hard, tough wood prized for its durability and lower tone qualities, walnut appears to be the emerging species for 2015. A couple companies introduced walnut shelled kits this year, including **Gretsch's** limited edition Renown Walnut kit (which is actually 6-ply walnut/maple/walnut). Cut with the famous Gretsch 30-degree bearing edges and fitted with die-cast tom hoops and walnut bass drum hoops, the series is available in two shell packs: 22" x 18" bass drum, 10" x 7" and 12" x 8" mounted toms, and a 16" x 14" floor tom (\$2,925.99 MSRP) and 20" x 16" bass drum, 10" x 7" and 12" x 8" mounted toms, and a 14" x 14" floor tom (\$2,770.99 MSRP) in either Gloss Natural or Satin Walnut Fade.

⑫ Gretsch's limited edition Renown Walnut kit



Built from 100-percent walnut shells, **Tama's** new Star Walnut kit features 7-ply, 6mm bass drums and 6-ply, 5mm shells for all other drums in the kit. Walnut lovers can choose among 11 different finishes, including six colors exclusive to the Star Walnut. The Star Series is Tama's high-end contender, and is priced accordingly, with the TW42ZS shell pack (22" x 18" bass drum, 10" x 8" and 12" x 9" toms, and 14" x 16" floor tom) clocking in at \$6,765 MSRP. Add a 14" x 12" floor tom to the pack and MSRP becomes \$8,029.

ALL WOOD IS GOOD

Gear heads tend to get worked up whenever someone mentions exotic woods and alternative materials, but let's face it — there's nothing wrong with good old maple and birch. Those standards have been around since the dawn of drum building, and provide the classic sound many drummers want under their sticks.

Take **Tama's** new Superstar Classic series, an all-maple kit with 8-ply, 7mm bass drums and 6-ply, 5mm toms, floor toms, and snares. These drums sport the classic T-badge and low-mass single lugs, and are outfitted with the Star mount system. Four new lacquers and four new wraps are available at very reasonable MSRPs of \$1,166.65 to \$1,499.98.

Famous for its wacky designs, **SJC** toned down the whack this year with the introduction of the new Magnum Maple kit. You can look for a 22" x 18" bass drum, 12" x 8" mounted tom, and 16" x 14" floor tom dressed up with tube lugs and 2.3mm hoops in a Natural or Ebony Ribbonwood finish. \$2,999 MSRP.

If you're in the market for sugar-hardened maple shells, you need to look no further than Canada — the land of maple syrup as well as the home of **Ayotte Drums**, which has introduced the Classic Series. You can order off the rack for 6-ply sugar-hardened maple shells with 6-ply reinforcing rings, or go nuts and get up to 40-ply shells for custom builds. All Classic Series drums are delivered with inlaid wooden hoops and some of the shiniest, glossiest lacquer finishes out there.

To compliment the Renown Walnut kit, **Gretsch** is now building a new 6-ply Renown Birch outfit. No blending woods here — the shells are 100-percent birch, and come with the same edges and die-cast hoops as its Walnut brethren at an MSRP of \$2,615 for a shell pack featuring a 22" x 18" bass drum, 10" x 7" and 12" x 8" mounted toms, and a 16" x 14" floor tom in either Piano Black Gloss or Satin Tobacco Burst.



Stone Custom Drums's Verry Cherry kit

While cherry wood has been used a bit more recently in drums, it's still something of a rarity in the big game, although that didn't stop the builders at **Stone Custom Drums** from displaying their new Verry Cherry kit at the last NAMM show. The company employs old growth burl cherry from the Great Lakes area to build these 3-ply shells.

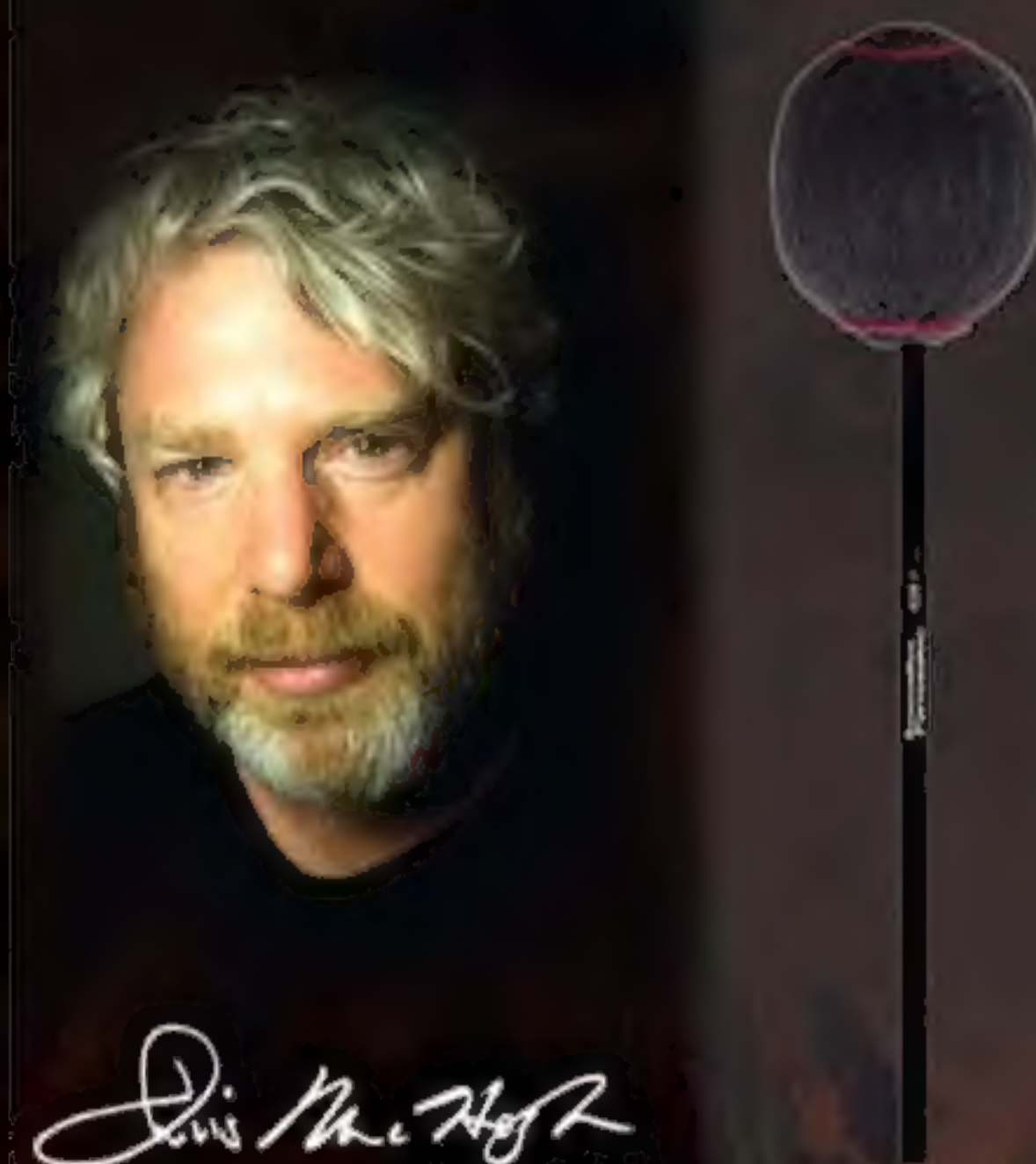
IT'S GETTING BETTER

Sleeker, faster, prettier, more comfortable — upgrades are always welcome news, whether you're talking about an airline seat or a drum kit. Plenty of companies chose 2015 as the year to upgrade existing and popular drum series in order to make the playing experience more pleasant.

Dixon's Blaze kits now have a new mounting system and come in shell packs. **The George H. Way Drum Company** has introduced the second series of Tuxedo Tradition kits and added mahogany to the current lineup of cherry, birch, walnut, and maple/poplar/maple shells. **Mapex's** Saturn IV maple/walnut hybrid shelled kits are upgraded to Saturn V status with SONIClear bearing edges (as used on the Armory and Mars series) and the new SONIClear tom mount. **Natal** added extra heft to its Originals Maple and Originals Walnut outfits by upgrading batter heads to Remo Coated Emperors on toms and Remo PS3 heads on bass drums, and is now supplying aluminum-ball single tom mounts on both series. **Pearl Masterworks** kits are now available with an inner-shell fiberglass treatment as an option, as well as Red Crimson shell gaskets for cosmetic pizzazz. Pearl is also integrating a swivel tube lug on all Masterworks toms, which uses a single swivel nut to reduce its mass. In a nod to the comeback of classic, shallower bass drums, Pearl Reference and Reference Pure bass drums (sized

NEW DRUMSET PRODUCTS 2015

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18"-24") are now available in 14" depths. Finally, Pearl is offering a way to upgrade your own drum kit with the Drumlite LED-banded light system, which puts lights inside your shells. Quite a "bright" idea with bass drum packages selling for \$99 and 4-piece kit packs starting at \$240. Best used in acrylic kits, the lights can also illuminate bass drumheads from inside for a very cool stage look. **Tama's** Starclassic line also gets a bump up with quick-release brackets and decal badges.

SEEING COLORS

And what are upgrades without some new finishes to ogle? The Bedford, **Ayotte's** entry-level kit, comes in only one color, especially for those of you who love your jeans: a denim finish. **Dixon's** Spark gets a new Black Sparkle finish, and the company's Blaze kit has a new Satin finish. **DW's** Design Series is

now offered in Matte Black Satin, and there are some cool new FinishPly wraps for the other drum lines — Gold and Silver Abalone, Tiger Oyster, Peacock Oyster, and Teal Glass. **The George H. Way Drum Co.** has added lacquer finishes in solids, two-tone ducos, and sparkles to the Tuxedo Tradition and Studio drum kits. **Natal** added Red Sparkle, Silver Sparkle, and Orange Sparkle finish options to its Originals Maple line and a Sunburst to the Originals Walnut. **Pearl's** Export now features Grindstone Sparkle wrap and a Nightshade Lacquer. **Masterworks** offers carbon-fiber banding options, and Reference and Reference Pure kits see the addition of Antique Walnut and Tangerine Dream finishes. **Pork Pie's** Hip Pig 8-ply eastern mahogany drum kits have been available for a while in a Blue-Silver Duco finish (like the vintage WFL and Ludwig two-toned



Ayotte's entry-level kit The Bedford, comes in a denim finish.

finishes) but this year the company introduced even more Duco choices with Red-Gold and Black-Gold options. **Tama** added some new Starclassic finishes and a Gloss Sycamore for Star Maple,

while Star Bubinga, Maple, and Walnut includes Coral Pink and Sunny Yellow Lacquer (that blazing yellow kit you can see new Tama endorser Peter Erskine playing on pages 44-45 of this very issue). ▣

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